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U.S. to Curb Export of Spying Devices

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WASHINGTON — Secretary of Commerce Frederick B. Dent will announce new export restrictions today to prevent Soviet police from buying sophisticated "personal surveillance" equipment in this country, an Administration source said Thursday.

The new rules will cover "export of police material and equipment to governments which might possibly use the material to suppress the legitimate aspirations of the people of that country," the source said, but indicated the controls would be aimed specifically at the Soviet Union.

U.S. manufacturers of such equipment, which includes what are considered the world's most advanced lie detectors, voice print analyzers, identification systems and night photography devices, have been invited to exhibit at a trade fair in Moscow next month.

The regulations to be announced today will prevent shipment of U.S.

made equipment to the show, called Krimtekhnika '74, as well as the booking of sales, the source said.

Exporting of police equipment of the type sought by the Soviet Union is not directly covered by existing laws controlling sales of weapons and technical apparatus considered important to national security.

To get at the police devices, the source said, the Administration will invoke executive authority, which has been used previously to ban the sale of similar equipment to South Africa.

The Administration's decision to act, which apparently was made Thursday, was prompted by public and private criticism from Rep. Charles A. Vanik (D-Ohio), Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.), and others.

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Percy, who reportedly notified the State Department more than a week ago of Soviet attempts to attract U.S. exhibitors to the show, said Thursday that such equipment could be used for oppression and that the sales could become obstacles to expanded East-West trade.

"It is an issue that lends itself to demagoguery, but it is a legitimate issue and should be addressed," Percy said. "The equipment could be used for suppression or it could be used against us."

Vanik and Jackson had spoken out earlier against U.S. participation in the show. Dent, asked about the controversy on Wednesday, said it was under review with the State Department but expressed no opinion on what should be done.

The first sign that the Administration had decided to act came Thursday afternoon when Vanik was notified that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, opposed such sales and had asked Dent to intervene. Kissinger's position was spelled out in a letter to Vanik from Linwood Holton, assistant secretary of state for congressional relations.

"To insure that the products of American industry do not contribute to the capability of police agencies in Communist countries to suppress dissent or control the activities of persons seeking to exercise their legitimate rights, Secretary Kissinger has asked the Department of Commerce to place the police equipment under additional controls," Holton's letter said.

"With regard to types of police equipment which could be used to suppress those persons in the Soviet Union who are striving to exercise basic human rights, as well as rights guaranteed them under the Soviet constitution, we would of course not promote sales . . . and would prevent such sales whenever it is legally possible to do so," Holton wrote to Vanik.